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CIA Paid Millions to Hussein

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King Hussein of Jordan received secret payments from the Central Intelligence Agency totaling millions of dollars over the last 20 years, according to intelligence sources here.

The payments were made to the Jordanian monarch by a succession of CIA station chiefs in the Jordanian capital of Amman, usually in cash, the sources said. One source said the purpose was to bolster secretly the shaky rule of the pro-American king and to insure his cooperation in permitting the CIA to operate freely in Jordan.

A former high-ranking CIA official, confirming that the payments were made, said the King also provided intelligence information to the agency.

WHILE NOT confirming the existence of payments to Hussein, the White House disclosed today that it is nearing completion of a review of all "sensitive foreign intelligence activi-

ties." On the basis of the findings of that study, "the President will make basic decisions concerning the future of such activities, the purpose of which is to protect the security of our country and its people," a White House statement said.

The statement said that "the objective of the review is to make certain that activities are proper, to insure full compliance with oversight procedures by law and that what can be done openly is not done secretly."

Disclosure of the payments to Hussein came at a particularly embarrassing moment for the administration. Secretary of State Cyrus Vance arrived in Jordan today as part of a visit he is making to the Middle East to explore possibilities for reducing tensions in the region.

THE WHITE HOUSE statement praised the Jordanian ruler. "King Hussein is an outstanding national leader," it said. "He and his government have played a constructive role in reducing tensions in the Middle East."

The review of intelligence activities began "almost from the first day of the (Carter) administration," according to the White House statement. Conducting it are "senior officials of the State Department, the CIA, Office of Management and Budget and the Department of Defense, including the joint chiefs."

The review was described as "intensive and comprehensive." But the White House would not comment directly on the matter of the payments to Hussein. "It is the administration's policy not to comment on — either to confirm or deny — any stories concerning alleged covert activities."

"By definition any comment would be a contradiction in terms since the operation in question would no longer be covert or secret," the statement said.

THE FORMER intelligence official, asked why the payments were made to Hussein under the CIA's blanket of secrecy instead of through normal aid channels, said, "Partly because we didn't want the open debate in Congress that goes with normal assistance for economic or military programs. But a more compelling reason was King Hussein's own domestic situation."

The source explained Hussein "had to preserve some appearance of being his own man in the Arab world because his country had more Palestinians of anti-Israel, anti-U.S. sentiment than native Jordanians."

The disclosure of the payments was made today by the Washington Post which said that President Gerald Ford learned about them from the three-member Intelligence Advisory Board last year but did nothing to stop what the board called an impropriety.

Carter learned of the payments this week, the newspaper said, and ordered the payments stopped.

APPARENTLY Carter had not been advised of the payments to Hussein by outgoing CIA Director George Bush or any member of the Ford administration including former Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger or the NSC director, Gen. Brent Scowcroft.

The matter was expected to be discussed at a lunch scheduled by Carter in the Oval Office with Adm. Stansfield Turner, his nominee for CIA director.

A spokesman for the Senate Intelligence Committee said the members were "actively looking into" the report.